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## **JSSA – Our Community’s “One-Stop-Shop” for Older Adult Services**

by Tal Widdes, JSSA Chief Operating Officer

Through the life span, adults experience a variety of changes, transitions and challenges. Living productively, independently and engaged continue to be primary goals. For many these goals can be achieved with little outside help – for others finding additional guidance and support can make all the difference.

The Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) is our community’s answer for easy to access, specialized, “worry-free” support. For 118 years, JSSA has been our community’s premier “one-stop-shop” for individuals 60 years old or older and their families seeking a broad range of trusted, expert and compassionate services and programs. JSSA’s service team provides specialized support for those facing difficult life decisions, health concerns, employment and retirement transitions, housing choices, and care-giving. Through offices in Maryland and Northern Virginia, JSSA’s seasoned professional team of licensed clinicians, case managers, career counselors and coaches, community liaisons and volunteers help clients preserve dignity and autonomy – the foundation of JSSA’s mission.

JSSA serves and supports nearly 9,000 older adults and their families annually, our staff working collaboratively with each other and community professionals to ensure that loved ones live well physically, socially and emotionally. All of JSSA’s services are custom-crafted to meet the needs of each client. JSSA’s areas of expertise includes promoting healthy aging; service coordination to facilitate independence; information and referral resources; Holocaust survivor services; in-office and at-home counseling and psychotherapy; career services; hospice care and in-home personal and nursing care through Premier Homecare (a nonprofit, wholly owned subsidiary of JSSA). For nearly 30 years, JSSA’s award-winning Jewish hospice has been serving and supporting individuals and families through compassionate end-of-life nursing, spiritual, and emotional care.

JSSA’s Employment and Career Services (ECS) program has a strong dedication to older adults, helping them navigate the increasingly difficult employment market for those 50+. JSSA has developed unique and trend-setting programming that goes beyond the stereotypical job search. Seminars and workshops focused on rebranding one’s self at 50+, “the entrepreneur in all of us” and the use of social networking, are but a few of the successful programs introduced in recent months. JSSA’s Job Search Boot Camp and Job Search Networking Group, mainstays in the agency’s outstanding ECS offerings, have developed programs specifically for older adults and have shown excellent results in achieving employment.

JSSA also offers a variety of volunteer programs including; kosher Meals-on-Wheels (with nearly 30,000 meals delivered annually to home-bound seniors); escorted transportation to medical

appointments and friendly visitors and shoppers. More than 100 specially trained volunteers provided 4,000 free visits to chronically or terminally ill patients this past year, offering vital companionship and respite care for families toward the end of life.

Ensuring that older adults remain socially engaged is also a JSSA priority. The Coming of Age (COA) program – a partnership between JSSA, the Jewish Council on Aging and the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Washington and NOVA – plans a variety of social and recreational events each month for individuals 60 and over. The program helps participants stay socially connected to the community, engaged and stimulated – all critical to well-being and longevity.

An organization always attuned to the fast changing needs of today's 60+ population, JSSA is continually exploring new and innovative programs. Recently, JSSA launched a specialized mobility training counseling program for its clinical staff – one of the first in the country. The program promotes acceptance of mobility changes and provides a supportive framework for planning for a time when an individual might need to reduce driving and make changes in their mobility.

Whether care management, counseling, in-home support, career services, hospice care or workshops and groups, JSSA is our community's "one-stop-shop" for individualized, expert and compassionate care for older adults. From the thousands of grateful letters we receive every year from our clients and their families, we know we are making a critical difference.

JSSA invites you to learn more. Please visit: [www.jssa.org/services/seniors](http://www.jssa.org/services/seniors); call 301-816-2633 (Maryland) or 703-896-7918 (NoVA), or email us at [contactus@jssa.org](mailto:contactus@jssa.org).

JSSA is a proud partner agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.